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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 600

By Davidson

A RESOLUTION To honor the memory of Drue H. Smith, long standing Capitol Hill correspondent and columnist.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Drue H. Smith, an institution among the Capitol Hill press corps and pioneer among professional women; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Drue H. Smith had adroitly covered the political scene on Capitol Hill in Nashville since the 1950s; an employee of GCA Newspaper Publishing Company, Inc., Ms. Smith was the Capitol Hill correspondent for radio and television stations and for the *Green Hills*, the *Belle Meade*, the *West Meade*, the *West Side* and the *Nashville Today* newspapers; and

WHEREAS, A native of Chattanooga, Tommie Drue Henderson was the daughter of Jess and Sara Henderson, who raised her in a traditional Southern household; she graduated from the Girls' Preparatory School of Chattanooga and continued her education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith started her journalism career as the Society Editor for both the *Chattanooga Times* and the *Chattanooga Free Press*; many Tennesseans first became

acquainted with her as an interviewer for various radio stations, including the Tennessee Radio Network, and for WDEF-TV Chattanooga, where she interviewed scores of famous people, including President John F. Kennedy; and

WHEREAS, Drue moved to Nashville, and quickly became known as a pioneer for women in her profession; she was the first female admitted to the Society of Professional Journalists, and the first woman to occupy the office of Chair of the Capitol Hill Press Corps; and

WHEREAS, Not content to accept gender restrictions in other areas, Ms. Smith conducted a personal sit-in protest at a Nashville restaurant, the Gerst Haus, to allow unescorted women to eat at the counter; and

WHEREAS, Drue Smith's journalistic abilities and flamboyant style earned for her the respect and affection of Tennessee political figures across the ideological spectrum; she was named "Reporter Laureate" and made the "133rd Member of the General Assembly" by State legislators in 1992; earlier, then Adjutant General Joe Henry, later Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, had named her an Honorary member of the Tennessee National Guard; and

WHEREAS, Drue was the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including being named Broadcaster of the Year by American Women in Radio and Television, being appointed to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service by President Kennedy, being named an Honorary Member of the Tennessee Broadcasters Association, and being the Guest of Honor at the Governor's residence in a special reception hosted by Governor Don Sundquist and former Governors Ned McWherter, Lamar Alexander, and Winfield Dunn; and

WHEREAS, The annual Gridiron Show conducted by the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists was renowned for Ms. Smith's portrayals of Tennessee political figures (and herself); she was honored by having a scholarship for young journalists named the "Drue Smith Scholarship"; and

WHEREAS, The most visible part of Drue's persona was her somewhat "unconventional" and definitely flamboyant wardrobe; the accessories of some of her ensembles were battery operated and often evoked amazement among those seeing her for the first time; and

WHEREAS, Her lack of conformity in dress notwithstanding, Ms. Smith gave generously of her time and energy to civic and charitable causes; she had been a spokeswoman and the State Chairman for the American Heart Association's Heart Sunday, was the recipient of a nationally reported \$14,000 bid at the Bachelor Bid to benefit Cystic Fibrosis, and was a co-founder of the Swine Ball, among other charitable activities; and

WHEREAS, Drue's many honors by various organizations over the years include being recognized as Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Women, as a political pioneer by the Woman's Suffrage Committee, and being accorded membership in the Tennessee Lobbyists Association on the Hill; she has been listed in the "*Who's Who in the South*" and was a member of the Belle Meade Plantation Chapter of the APTA, the Ceres Society, the Society of Professional Journalists, which she chaired for three years, and the University of Tennessee Alumni Association. Drue recently served as Honorary Chair for the Women's Political Caucus and Heroes for the Heart in 1999 and received the Good Guys Award in 1998; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith's excellence as a professional journalist was enhanced by her ability to slyly share gossip - in a manner that was never malicious - to get her sources to provide even more and better information; that legendary ability, along with her dependability in protecting a confidence, assured her access to any story that she might choose to pursue; and

WHEREAS, Drue Smith possessed a keen intellect and insight which her Southern charm rendered non-threatening; those qualities along with her colorful and flamboyant character endeared her to Tennessee's politicians, her professional peers in journalism, and her thousands of readers and listeners; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Roy Blaney Smith; she was the proud mother of Drusilla Smith Fuller; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life and many achievements of this exceptional journalist and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of our friend, Drue H. Smith, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character, her sparkling personality, her commitment to professional excellence, and her obvious joy in living.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Drue Smith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.